

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TAGS: PINT, MR, SOPN
SUBJ: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: INTERVIEW
WITH NEW PRESIDENT

1. IN INTERVIEW WITH NOUAKCHOTT DAILY CHAAB PUBLISHED JULY
12, 1978 PRESIDENT OF MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY
(CMRN) MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALECK EXPANDED SOMEWHAT ON
STATEMENTS MADE EARLIER TO JOURNALISTS FROM RADIO MAURITANIA
AND RADIO FRANCE AND BROADCAST JULY 11. PRESIDENT
MOUSTAPHA EXPLAINED THAT QREOVER ONLY DECIDED UPON AT LAST
MOMENT BECAUSE MILITARY HAD WANTED TO EXPLORE ALL OTHER
ALTERNATIVES FOR IMPROVING SITUATION. IN LAST ANALYSIS, IT
WAS DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION, SYMBOLIZED BY FACT THAT
NO WORKERS WERE NEVER CERTAIN OF RECEIVING PAYCHECKS AT THE
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END OF MONTH, WHICH LED ARMY TO ACT.

2. MOUSTAPHA ALSO STRUCK HARD AT FORMER REGIME, STATING THAT
CERTAIN MEMBERS HAD DIVERTED PUBLIC
RESOURCES TO THEIR OWN GAIN, SOME CONSTRUCTING PALACES AND
VILLAS, PURCHASING CARS FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES,
WHILE PEOPLE WERE REDUCED TO UNSPEAKABLE MISERY. HE SINGLED

OUT BANKS IN PARTICULAR WHICH BENEFITTED ONLY A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE, WERE FUNDAMENTALLY TRIBAL AND REGIONAL (UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY FORMER PRESIDENT'S BROTHER AHMED OULD DADDAH WAS GOUVERNOR OF CENTRAL BANK), AND CORRUPT AS WELL. MOUSTAPHA ALSO ACCUSED FORMER REGIME OF HYPOCRISY IS STAND ON TRIBALISM, THROUGH ITS PRACTICE OF CONDEMNING IT PUBLICLY WHILE PRACTICING IT SHAMEFULLY IN REALITY. SPECIFIC MENTION WAS MADE OF SUGAR AND OIL REFINERIES, AND BLAME FOR ANARCHY IN INDUSTRIAL SECTOR LAID AT FEET OF UNNAMED INDIVIDUALS WHOSE RVJETARY##GREED LED THEM INTO DISHONESTY.

3. NOT TO HAVE ACTED IN SUCH A SITUATION, MOUSTAPHA MAINTAINED, WOULD HAVE BEEN CRIMINAL, AND TO HAVE HAD TO PUT UP WITH THE HARRASSMENT OF A PARTICULARLY VIRULENT INTERNAL ENEMY AT THE SAME TIME IT WAS REQUIRED TO WAGE AN EXTERNAL WAR, WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. MUSTAPHA EMPHASIZED BLOODLESS NATURE OF TAKEOVER, WHICH EXTENDED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, AND IN ABSENCE OF ANY EXTERNAL INTERVENTION. HE CITED LACK OF VENGEANCE AND RETALIATION, AND EMPHASIZED NECESSITY OF PRESERVING WHAT EXISTED (IF IN FACT ANYTHING OF SUBSTANCE STILL DOES) BEFORE BEGINNING TO CREATE A NEW ORDER.

4. WHILE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TOWARDS RECOVERY HAVE YET BEEN MENTIONED, MOUSTAPHA NOTED IMPORTANCE OF EXPLOITING BOTH MINERAL AND FISHING RESOURCES, CRITICIZING IN PARTICULAR THE INADEQUACY OF THE TAXES IMPOSED
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ON FISHING VESSELS IN CONTRAST TO THE SYSTEMATIC PILLAGING OF THE TERRITORIAL WATERS BY FOREIGN FISHING.

5. ON THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF THE WAR, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS A WAR QUOTE IMPOSED ON US FOR PARTICULAR REASONS UNQUOTE, MOUSTAPHA ADDED THAT IT WAS NATURAL FORMAURITANIANS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES WITH ALL THE MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL, BUT THAT QUOTE WHAT IS CERTAIN TODAY IS THAT NEITHER THE PEOPLE NOR THE LEADERSHIP WANT THE MAURITANIAN NATION TO REMAIN IN A STATE OF WAR. END QUOTE. HE STATED THAT THE CMRN WOULD NOT SPARE ANY EFFORT TO ARRIVE AT A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD AGAIN BRING PEACE AND SECURITY TO THE REGION. HE ALSO ADDED THAT THE CMRN HAD QUOTE FIRM HOPE END QUOTE THAT THIS COULD BE DONE IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR MOROCCAN BROTHERS.

6. LATER, JULY 11, MOUSTAPHA GAVE INTERVIEW TO RADIO FRANCE CORRESPONDENTS. IN IT HE CHARACTERIZED HIS TWO HOPES FOR MAURITANIA AS CONSISTING OF RAIN AND PEACE, TWO CATCHWORDS WHICH ONE COULD HEAR REPEATED FREQUENTLY IN THE STREET THROUGHOUT THE DAY. MOUSTAPHA REPEATED ON TWO OCCASIONS IN THE INTERVIEW HIS VIEW THAT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES WOULD PROVIDE THE GUIDANCE ON BOTH THE CONTINUING CHARACTER OF

THE REGIME (WHETHER IT BE MILITARY OR CIVILIAN) AND ON THE QUESTION OF CONTINUING THE WAR. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION AS TO WHETHER REGIME WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE POLISARIO, MOUSTAPHA SAID HE WOULD CONSULT WITH THE MOROCCANS ON ESTABLISHING A WORK SCHEDULE WHICH WOULD LEAD TO PEACE, IF PEACE IS WANTED BY THE MAN IN THE STREET.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH MOUSTAPHA'S STATEMENTS DO LITTLE TO ESTABLISH HIS REGIME'S POLITICAL STANCE, THEY AT LEAST SUGGEST A DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY ON SAHARA QUESTION. KRYZA

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

NOTE #2: ##AS RECEIVED.

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